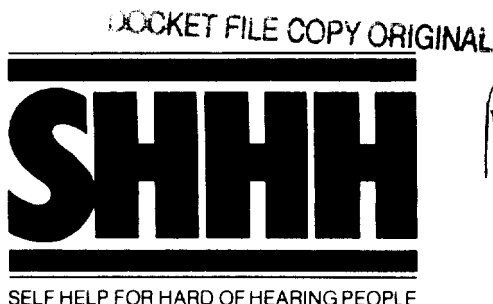


11/26/00

Office of the Secretary
FCC
445 12th St., SW
TW-A325
Washington, DC 20554



RM-8658
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FCC MAIL ROOM

Dear Sir:

I am writing on behalf of 68,000 Virginians who are hard of hearing. As hard of hearing people our needs are varied and distinct. To put it simply we as individuals need special devices to hear. Thanks to modern technology, hearing aids are improving daily and that enhances our ability to hear. Cochlear Implants are becoming more conventional among the deaf and hard of hearing. Can we now hear perfectly with a hearing aid or implant? NO. Hearing aid technology has helped us hear better but a hearing aid is not like glasses that correct vision to 20/20. We still have hearing loss. It will never go away. Most often hearing loss gets worse with aging.

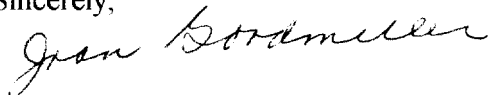
Hearing aids have become more technologically suited to modern times allowing us to use a telecoil in the hearing aid that couples with electromagnetic fields in the handset of the telephone or cell phone. This is called Hearing Aid Compatible. This function is critically needed by all of us who use telephones and cell phones.

As hard of hearing people we depend on devices such as this to function normally. We are asking you to do away with the exemption for wireless phones under the Hearing Aid Compatibility Act of 1988. The FCC is supposed to review this exemption every 5 years and this has not happened.

Our members state that the problem of accessibility is getting worse. We deal with static, volume problems, interference inside buildings, etc. We are terrified that we will find ourselves in a serious situation with no real means of contacting anyone. I have tried for a month to purchase a hearing aid compatible cell phone since I am increasing my traveling. I have yet to find such a phone one month later.

We are asking that the Hearing Aid Compatibility Law (HAC) bring us where we need to be. We should be able to go to any store selling cell phones and have our choice of cell phone that meets our individual needs. Please reconsider this situation for 28 million Americans who are hard of hearing.

Sincerely,



Joan Goodmiller
SHHH VA State Coordinator
Self Help for Hard of Hearing People
2204 Old Fincastle Road
Fincastle, VA 24090
540-473-3185

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